THE POWER OF GRATITUDE

A Guide For Getting Through The Tough Times And Living A Happier Life

Live Happily™
SECRETS
BY STELLA FRANCES

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When everything is going great in your life, it is easy to look around you and feel grateful for your situation and surroundings. When you are given a special gift from someone you care about, you feel an instant sense of gratitude and are thankful for that person.

When you are given a new opportunity such as a new job, you feel grateful and full of self-worth. Those are just a couple of examples, but we all know that special feeling of gratitude toward the world around us.

When disaster hits or we are going through a tough time though, it is easy to look around and point out all of the things going wrong in life. The feeling of gratitude you had just a couple of days ago seems to have gone away and you are left wondering what you did to deserve this and feel miserable about your life.

During tough times, uncertainty and fear seem to take over our feelings of gratitude and our minds begin to fill with intense emotions like worry, anxiety and sadness.

It is important to realize that the positive and grateful feelings you experience when amazing things occur in your life, can be lived during the hardest times as well. Since we all understand what it feels like to be grateful for something or someone, we know that gratitude is present within, even if it feels out of reach.

It is important to work on various techniques and strategies to recognize gratitude in all moments of your life. This will drastically improve your wellbeing and overall satisfaction with life, making you a happier and more positive person to be around.

What is Gratitude?

Gratitude has many definitions and can appear in everyone's life in different ways, but it is - generally speaking - the overall satisfaction and appreciation that you have for your life. Gratitude leaves you in a constant state of joy and thankfulness and is an important emotional response to your surroundings.

Being grateful for the world around you makes you feel as if you are being rewarded and are receiving positive benefits, whether it be tangible or intangible, that bring you pure happiness and peace.

It is important to recognize that gratitude is not only a natural phenomenon that is an emotional response but a choice that you can make each and every day. Every day, you can work on finding more and more moments of gratitude in your routine and daily life and you will notice that over time, you will naturally feel more grateful for your life as a whole.

Robert Emmons, a scientific expert on the subject of gratitude and its components, claims that gratitude is an "affirmation of goodness. We affirm that there are good things in the world, gifts, and benefits we've received."

Once we can realize the goodness surrounding our lives and that lie within, we can truly experience gratitude in all aspects of our lives, even during the most difficult times.

A personal experience

Let me share with you a personal experience. Some years ago I was a woman that seemed and actually had all that a woman of my age would dream of. In my mid-thirties I was thriving at my job working in a multinational firm, was living in a big house with my husband and daughter, and to make a long story short I was enjoying the so-called "American dream" that we see in the commercials.

The only problem was that I didn't feel happy. I had everything yet I felt something was missing. I was pushing myself to my limits to achieve more of everything. More victories in my work environment, and more recognition from my family. I was trying to control, one way or the other, the outcome of many situations in my life both on a personal and social level by micromanaging and overanalyzing anything.

But I wasn't happy and in a strange way, I didn't feel I was enough. Depression and anxiety soon appeared in my life and overstretching myself made its impact obvious on my health.

That was when it hit me. I turned inwards and started questioning myself why this was happening to me. And after some deep soul-searching and reading, I started to re-focus my energy on my victories and all the good I had in my life. Doing many of the things I share with you in this free guide, gradually I saw my mood getting better, and my life changed for the better.

It was an inside thing at first. I started appreciating life more and every day I found several things to be proud of, recognize and celebrate. Within some months I became an energized and happy person. I was doing pretty much the same things as before, but now I was doing them with a new mentality. A grateful mentality that allowed me to enjoy my everyday life to the fullest.

Being grateful for all my being, my life, my mistakes, and my past and present led me to become a happier person. And that I don't trade it with anything.

Why Gratitude is Important

Gratitude comes from the Latin root *gratia. Gratia* means graciousness and grace. Gratitude allows you to connect to a higher power and have deeper connections with those around you and in your environment. When you are more connected to the world, you will appreciate it more making gratitude a positive cycle for your life.

Gratitude is so important because it directly determines the overall well-being, satisfaction, and happiness we will experience. No matter how much we have in life, we will never feel happy or satisfied if we are not grateful or appreciative. This is why it is so important to constantly be practicing gratitude when searching for happiness, rather than always trying to have more.

When you are grateful and observant of all of the little things in life, you will be happy through the ups and downs that come with life. Even when you are experiencing the lowest points in your life, gratitude is so important because it allows you to realize that life, in general, is a gift and that there are so many different aspects of life to be grateful for.

Gratitude allows you to deal with adversity, build healthier and stronger relationships, and truly appreciate those around you; most importantly, will allow

you to experience more positive emotions and experiences. In addition, gratitude can be very beneficial for your overall health.

The mental stability that gratitude provides can be very helpful when challenges arise, and you are forced to deal with adversity. You will also be able to help others and will make them feel good when they are going through tough times with the gratitude that you have developed over time.

A story from the Christian religion

To pay respect to my Greek Christian roots, I will borrow a story from the New Testament that describes a miracle Jesus made when he was in the desert with his disciples teaching to a crowd of around 5000 people.

The disciples at some point consult Christ to tell the crowd to leave and go find food to eat because in the desert where they were there was no way for so many people to eat. However, Christ didn't follow their advice. Instead, he asked them to bring him the five loaves of bread and the two fish they already carried with them.

Christ after blessing them cut them into pieces and gave the pieces to his disciples and to the people. From these pieces, thousands of people that were present in the desert ate and were satisfied.

Now, what does that story symbolize? It's pretty obvious I think. It symbolizes the power of gratitude and gratefulness. Jesus with his act sent the message that if we appreciate what we have (even if in reality doesn't seem enough) and feel blessed for having them then we are bestowed with more of them including bliss and satisfaction.

That we can say is one of the first paradigms of the impact of gratitude in human life. And an example of the law of attraction at work.

**"Gratitude can transform common days into thanksgivings,
turn routine jobs into joy, and
change ordinary opportunities into blessings."**

William Arthur Ward

Impacts of Gratitude

There are seven main scientifically proven benefits of gratitude on your overall well-being. It is an extremely beneficial tool to significantly impact and improve your life that is surprisingly overlooked.

Gratitude does occur naturally but making an effort to find it in different moments of your life each and every day takes practice, dedication, and consistency. When you understand the different impacts that gratitude has, you will want to take the initiative and change your life for the better.

Health

According to studies published in Psychology Today, grateful people experience less physical pain and are more likely to take care of their physical health. When you become overwhelmed with gratitude for your life and health, you will consistently make an effort to maintain good health.

From making time to go to the doctor's office regularly for check-ups to taking necessary vitamins and making healthy choices, grateful people take time for self-care to improve their physical health. In addition, people who experience gratitude throughout their day are much more productive and motivated to exercise and stay physically active.

Self-Confidence

Gratitude is the key to being more confident and believing in yourself. Gratitude allows you to get out of your head and get rid of the overthinking and negative self-talk you may be experiencing. We all work so hard to fight and control the uncertainty (inherent in life by the way) and any unpredictable events that could potentially occur in our life that ultimately prevent us from stepping out of our comfort zones and realizing our true capabilities.

These so-called walls you have built up in your mind to protect yourself from potentially negative situations that could occur in your life can have serious impacts on your confidence and self-esteem. You will no longer believe that you are good enough or worth it to take the risks you need to achieve your goals and aspirations.

When you are grateful for your life, you look to others around you with a positive impact and realize that they are not out to get you. This allows you to embrace uncertainty and live your life to its fullest potential.

What's more, a grateful attitude towards yourself, your best qualities, and your achievements, permits you to acknowledge and celebrate your victories, thus building and strengthening your self-worth, self-esteem, and self-confidence.

Resilience

Gratitude allows you to recognize all that you have and truly believe that it is enough even during times of extreme difficulty and adversity. When you go through tough events, it is very easy to focus on the negatives around you and everything going wrong.

When you can take a step back and find positives during difficult situations, you will react better and will be more mentally strong.

Gratitude builds resilience because it allows you to be both mentally and emotionally stronger. You will be able to make better decisions and feel more satisfied when you are grateful for your surroundings. In addition, gratitude allows you to overcome trauma in a much more productive and efficient way.

You will no longer be living in the past and you will learn to accept what happened in the past, rather than living in a place of regret.

Letting go of the past by cultivating gratitude in the present moment builds up the mental strength necessary for moving forward in life.

Improved Relationships

When you are more grateful for the actions of others, your relationships will improve significantly. You will feel more appreciative of all the ways they care for and support you, of the role they play in your life, and will be more empathetic and understanding of them.

They will appreciate you in turn and will recognize that you are more pleasant to be around and joyful. People enjoy being around those who are happy and grateful, so this will make your friendships and other relationships stronger and more fulfilling.

Acknowledging others can lead to new opportunities in both your professional and personal life. It can allow you to meet new people and make new friends. You will be more understanding of others when you are appreciative of them and will be less angry during difficult situations.

If you're curious about the concept of the law of attraction and would like to learn more about it here's your next step. I have published a *self-coaching program on how the Law Of Attraction can change* the way you think about the world around you and connects you with the future in a truly powerful way. So be sure to check it out and see how it resonates with you.

"Acknowledging the good that you already have in your life is the foundation for all abundance"

Eckhart Tolle

Changing Your Mindset

When you decide to cultivate gratitude and finally commit to it, you will be on a path to consistent happiness and satisfaction. This requires significant transitions in your mindset and perspective on life as well as whom you choose to surround yourself with. The process takes time and dedication but has tons of benefits in your life as a whole. It may not be easy to transition your mind when adversity hits or difficult situations come about, but building up the resilience that gratitude brings will lead you to a life of prosperity and well-being.

Shifting from Negativity to Gratitude

Many people have a victim mentality and a negative mindset. They constantly look for the flaws in others and point out any mistakes they may make. They search for disagreements and pick battles freely, leaving them empty and emotionally drained. Negative people turn to gossip about others to spark conversation, and never feel satisfied with their relationships or surroundings.

Rather than pointing out all of the flaws in your own life or looking at the mistakes of others, cultivating gratitude requires a total shift and transformation in your mindset. You shift your energy towards positive energy and only look to people who support you and lift you. Gratitude requires an optimistic mindset and positive reactions to the world around you. Rather than looking to the past, you can be grateful for the moment you are living in which cultivates inner peace and joy.

The new attitude and outlook you will have on life by shifting from a negative mindset to gratitude and positivity may change the relationships you have with others. You will observe those who are gossiping in your life and realize that they are toxic to your mental and emotional well-being.

This may require you to distance yourself which can be very painful and feel like a loss. However, it is important to understand that you must act based on what will lift you and improve your life the most by looking at what makes you feel most grateful.

Shifting from Past and Future to Present

Living in the present moment and accepting what is occurring in your life right now is a mindset that takes lots of energy and effort but will provide everlasting benefits. When you are living in the past, you feel a sense of regret and wish that things were different.

This causes depression and resentfulness that is very negative for your emotions. In addition, looking far ahead into the future and trying to control uncertain outcomes or feeling anxious about what the future has in store for you is emotionally draining and causes both fear and anxiety.

It is important to recognize these behaviors and habits that leave you missing out on the present moment. The anxiety and depression that comes from not living in the moment take happiness away from you and puts you in a negative emotional loop.

Through meditation and other techniques, you can train the mind to move to a state of presence and appreciation for the life you are living. This will also allow your life to flow freely, rather than feeling like you have to control things that are unpredictable and uncertain.

Living in the present allows you to accept the fact that you cannot change the past or predict the future. Knowing that these things are out of your control and that adversity can occur whether you think about it or not, brings you a deep state of inner peace and makes room in the mind for grateful thoughts.

You will be able to find gratitude in the toughest of times because you are not scared of what the future may bring, and you are no longer trying to change what happened in your past, or “beating” yourself up and regretting your mistakes.

Tips for Improving Sense of Gratitude

There are many techniques and strategies that you can develop as habits to improve your mind and shift towards a grateful mindset. These strategies take dedication and commitment but will provide tons of benefits in every aspect of your daily life. Personal gratitude practice is extremely powerful and will allow you to achieve your goals and aspirations.

Committing to a sense of gratitude will lead to health and emotional as well as mental well-being in your personal and professional life. Gratitude changes your outlook on life and your satisfaction with your surroundings and ultimately leads to inner peace. Below are a few ways to cultivate gratitude and incorporate it into your daily routine.

Meditation

Meditation and finding inner peace teach you to control your mind and is the best way to transform your mindset. It allows you to be intentional in cultivating gratitude and allows you to learn how to live in the present while letting go of regrets from the past and expectations for the future.

When you are calmer and more positive about your surroundings, you will obtain the inner peace you need to let go of reacting to all of the negative things that occur in your life and build up resilience to get through tough times. In doing so, you are present and

will observe all of the little things that you appreciate, even during times of adversity.

Start by meditating for ten minutes each day, and gradually increase the time by setting goals for yourself. You can even choose to utilize a guided meditation that allows you to contemplate the things that bring you gratitude. When you recognize things that make you grateful for life, you will feel the meditation and presence carry on throughout the rest of the day while letting go of things that may be stressing you out.

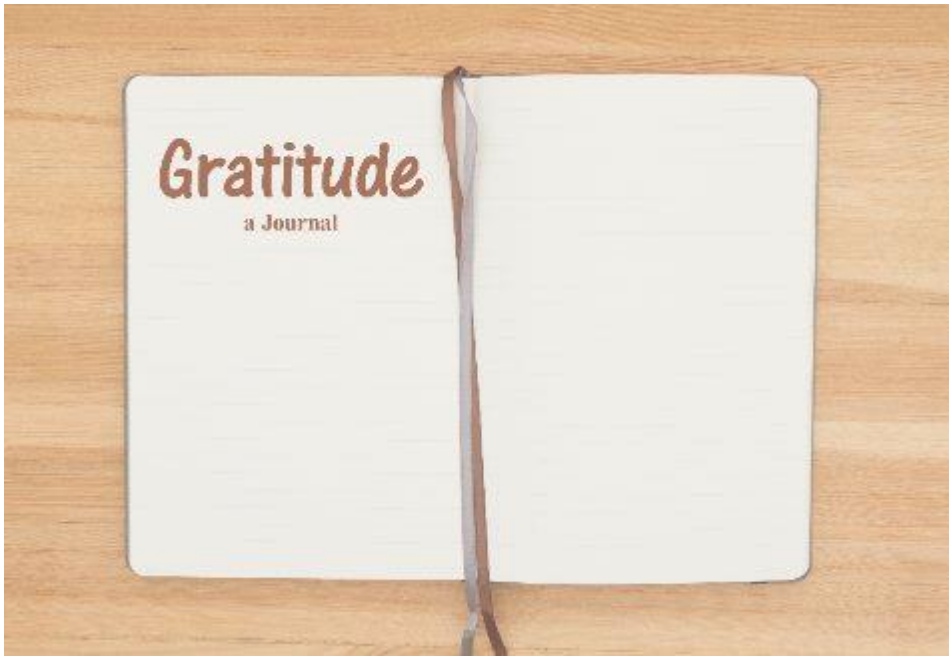
Gratitude Journal

Starting a gratitude journal is the best way to incorporate gratitude into your daily routine and keep yourself accountable during tough times. A gratitude journal is a tool that allows you to keep track of all of the things you appreciate while gradually shifting your mindset to a more positive one.

When you are focused on writing down all of the good, you will eventually train the mind to search for it on its own through many different moments throughout the day. You will find yourself noticing the little things such as your first sip of coffee or the nature around you and will recognize them to lift your mood.

When writing in a journal, you will identify new perspectives and ways to improve your gratitude and the way you interact with others. You will become more self-aware and adjust your attitude to a more positive and happier one.

You will learn what really matters for your happiness and will learn more about what you can do without.



Each morning when you first wake up, write down five things that make you feel grateful for your life. Each day, you can also do different journaling prompts allowing you to focus and identify many other roots of gratitude in various aspects of your life.

For example, you could spend one day writing about a single person who makes you feel intense gratitude or different skills you have that you feel grateful for.

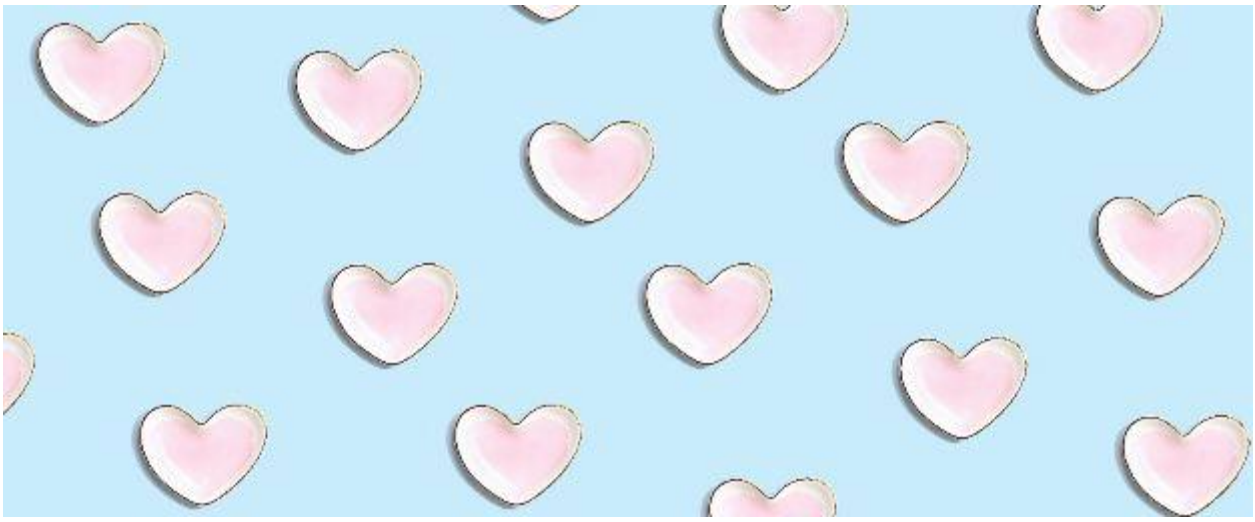
You can also analyze ways that your life has improved from a year ago until now and different things you may be taking for granted. This will cultivate a grateful mindset throughout the rest of your day.

And if you want to signal the beginning of writing down the things you are grateful for, *have a look at my specially designed gratitude journal here* to make it your ally on your new daily habit. It can work as your motive to fill it up with huge doses of appreciation and remind you of all the things you have been grateful for.

"Be thankful for what you have; you'll end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don't have, you will never, ever have enough"

Oprah Winfrey

Acts of kindness



Choosing to engage in acts of kindness towards other people, can cultivate substantially your gratitude feeling and attitude about life. Simple acts of offering your time, energy, money, or knowledge and experience can prove to be highly beneficial for filling your heart with that magical gratefulness feeling.

You can choose to spend some of your free time on a voluntary project concerning the community you live in or a greater cause that can have international dimensions. You can donate alternatively things that you don't want or are of no use to you anymore.

My mentor, Jack Canfield, the famous author, and motivational speaker has shared that one of his 50 rules of success is returning to your community (in every way possible - you get to choose) a portion of your luck. In simple words, if you get a rise you get to let's say donate 10% of it back to the world, expressing in that way your appreciation and gratefulness.

By being kind towards others and the universe in general, allows you to see the gratitude attitude mirrored to you by other people who are the recipients of your behavior.

"He is a wise man who does not grieve for the things which he has not, but rejoices for those which he has."

Epictetus

Final Thoughts

Gratitude is highly beneficial and can literally transform not only your mindset but your whole life. After all, these two are interconnected and a shift in your mentality for the better will gradually and eventually lead to a change in your life.

So, the answer to a more happy and more fulfilling life lies in developing a grateful attitude and acknowledging the value of the persons, things, and situations that surround you.

Incorporating the habit to remind yourself of the good things you have will re-adjust your mentality towards a positive outlook and a mindset that will welcome abundance in your life.

As the saying goes, "energy goes where attention flows" so if you focus on the goodness around you, your energy will shift towards goodness thus more goodness will appear in your surroundings. The law of attraction will take care of it. You only have to take heed of your thoughts and be consistent in practicing gratitude.

And if you need some extra help to get you started, don't miss out on visiting my website at **StellaFrances.com** for more free tools and resources on living a happier and more meaningful life.

As always I have your back.

And I am grateful that my work can serve as a motive and inspiration to you to transform your life for the better.

Until next time…

"When you are grateful, fear disappears and abundance appears."

Anthony Robbins

Create Your Own Gratitude Practice

"Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it."

William Arthur Ward

Set aside 20-30 minutes and find somewhere soothing where you can sink into yourself and this guide. Make this your “Me” time. Take a few moments to meditate or focus on your breath as you quiet the mind. For sure you earned it! Take your time to ponder upon each question and let your intuition guide you to the answer.

Tip: Do your best to identify the items for each question - and answer them from the heart. This isn't about what looks good on paper but how grateful you are of however small or unimportant it might seem.

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1. When was the last time you were grateful for something or someone, and do you remember how it felt?

2. When was the last time you turned a rough day around by focusing on gratitude?

3. Have you ever received a note that touched your heart? How did you feel?

4. List 3-5 people that had a positive impact on your life.

5. Looking at your list, who could you send a thank you note to today?

6. How can you be generous and kind to those around you today?

7. What are you are most grateful for?

Make it a list of 5 reasons for being thankful and ask yourself this question every night before you fall asleep. You will be amazed how much more peaceful you will feel when you close your day in this manner. Indeed, the best way to elevate your happiness in just under 2 minutes.

"I would maintain that thanks are the highest form of thought; and that gratitude is happiness doubled by wonder."

G.K. Chesterton

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"A thankful heart is not only the greatest virtue, but the parent of all the other virtues."
-Cicero